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NEMO'S ALMANAC 2013

A literary competition in its 122nd year

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Gabriel Baugniet

What means a leaning head, eyelids ajar,
And lips thick-sown with whispers? Sir, I say,
Before tomorrow you'll be soused in love
To the ear's tip. In truth, it will be so;
Sure as an almanac.

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RULES

The quotations are to be identified by reference to author, work and, where appropriate, line number or number of chapter, act or scene. Ten marks are given for each answer with full references **including source**. Incomplete answers and guesses will receive marks on their merits. Extra marks will be given for answers found only by one or two competitors, also for exceptionally good answers, at the Editor's discretion.

2. The Prizes are book tokens of amounts dictated by the modest budget of the Almanac (this year these are £50, £40 and £30). No competitor may can take a first prize two years running, or any prize at all in the fourth year, after three years running.

3. Answers are to be typed or legibly written on one side of the paper only, leaving a margin for marks on the right hand side. Full name and address are to be written on the first page. The entry, accompanied by the coupon above should reach the editor not later than September 1st of the year on the cover. Please mark your envelope "Nemo".

4. If a reasonably sized stamped addressed envelope is enclosed, entries will be returned with an answer sheet.

5. A pseudonym may be used, but prizewinners' names will be published.

6. No author is quoted more than once. No extract is in translation.

7. The editor's decision is final in every case.

JANUARY

1
From twenty yards I saw my old love
Locking up her car.
She smiled and waved, as lovely still
As girls of twenty are.

2
The Incense that is mine by right
They burn before Her shrine;
And that's because I'm seventeen
And She is forty-nine.

3
Cou'd I find a blooming Youth;
Full of Love, and full of Truth,
Brisk, and of a jolly meen,
I shou'd long to be fifteen.

4
Thirteen's no age at all. Thirteen is nothing.
It is not wit, or powder on the face,
Or Wednesday matinées, or misses' clothing,
Or intellect, or grace.
Twelve has its tribal customs.

5
Here's to the maiden of bashful fifteen;
Here's to the widow of fifty:
Here's to the flaunting extravagant quean,
And here's to the housewife that's thrifty.

6
Along the bank of a river,
past resting swans,
a boy with a rod is running —
he must be fifteen
and the rod must be fifteen feet

FEBRUARY

set by Caroline Heal

1.

The meadows sloping to
A wooded, sunken, mud-brown beck
Where, brilliant, a kingfisher flew
A flash beneath the wooden bridge,
I shall not see

2

under the bank where it's dark, blue
as fire the kingfishers are hunting,
blue as storm, iridescent, alive
to the quoit on the surface

3

A kingfisher was sitting on an overhanging branch and its vivid blue
blue was reflected as bluely in the crystal stream. It flew away
with a flashing glitter of jewelled wings when Neil, slipping off
his sarong and baju, scrambled down into the water.

4

Not that my eyesight is bad, for when the Kingfisher
Darts from his sluice, I catch him in a corner
Of my vision, and you share him, and even now
Can I lead your rounded bright eye
To the fish flash as the grandfatherly heron
Bangs him on the water under The Rocks?

5

In Black Mud
Darts the kingfisher. On Corpus Christi, heart,
Over the drum-beat of St. Stephen's choir
I hear him, Stupor Mundi, and the mud
Flies from his hunching wings and beak -- my heart,
The blue kingfisher dives on you in fire.

6

I, all alone saw the kingfisher fly.

Not as before, startled by friendly prod,
In stagnant ditch to imagine something quiver,
Lost while half-seen; but brilliant, clear, and broad,
Forty-two yards up the middle of the river
Under my eyes shot the turquoise unflawed!

MARCH

set by Jeff Dowse

1

And the kingfisher goes shricking
At the edge of the shining sea.
I say: What do you want.
What do you want.
What do you want from me?

2
I met a girl from Derrygarve
And the name, a lost potent musk,
Recalled the river's long swerve,
A kingfisher's blue bolt at dusk.

3
THAT a King-fisher hanged by the bill, sheweth
in what quarter the wind is by an occult and
secret propriety, converting the breast to
that point of the Horizon from whence the wind doth
blow, is a received opinion, and very strange

4
But still the flash of the kingfisher, the wingbeat of the scoter,
The sun a ball of fire coming down over the water,
The last geese crossing against the reflected afterlight,
The moon retreating into a vague cloud-shape

5
After the kingfisher's wing
Has answered light to light, and is silent, the light is still
At the still point of the turning world.

6
a kingfisher's burnished plunge, the color
of felicity afire, came glancing like an arrow
through landscapes of untended memory: ardour
illuminating with its terrifying currency
now no mere glimpse, no porthole vista
but, down on down, the uninhabitable sorrow.

APRIL

1

One beautiful girl stood entirely naked on the sand, and there as she half sat, half reclined sideways, leaning upon her elbow with her knees bent and her legs and feet partly drawn back and up, she was a model for a sculptor, there was the supple slender waist, the gentle dawn and tender swell of the bosom and the budding breasts, the graceful rounding of the delicately beautiful limbs and above all the soft and exquisite curves of the rosy dimpled bottom and broad white thigh.

2

It felt most peculiar crawling naked up the cold, rough stone steps – exciting in some mysterious way I couldn't explain to myself. Coming out at the top was glorious, warmth and light fell round me like a great cape.

3

So it is that you find me tonight
Loitering here outside your front door
Having paid off a taxi in three ten-pound notes,
Nude, with a steering wheel in my hands.

4

Poor Truth, she stript, as has been said
And naked left the lovely maid,
Who, scorning from her cause to wince
Has gone stark-naked ever since

5

For I thought the bathing place one of the most beautiful sights in the world: the thin naked boys dancing about in the sunlight on the bright green grass: the splashing, sparkling river: the reckless high dives, when the slim bodies shot down through the air like angels coming down from heaven.

6

Six pretty Nymphs to wash away
The sweating of a summer's day,
In *Chams* fair streams did gently swim
And naked bathe each curious limbe.

MAY

1
First the soft Bag-pipe mourn'd with zealous haste,
The Stranger next with head on bosom bent
Sigh'd: rueful again the piteous Bag-pipe went,
Again the Stranger sighings fresh did waste.

2
Dear to the Lowland reaper,
And plaided mountaineer, —
To the cottage and the castle
The Scottish pipes are dear; —
Sweet sounds the ancient pibroch
O'er mountain, loch and glade

3
I was invited
to repeat the reading
before a Burns Night Gathering
where the Balmoral Pipers
of Albuquerque would
play in the haggis
out of its New York tin.
Of course, I said
No.

4
We feast on venison from a neighbouring hill
Under that Campbell general's eye.
The drone of pipes across the bay,
The pibroch 'Cattle of Kintail'
Played by the piper of the isle.

5
Some, that are mad if they behold a cat;
And others, when the bag-pipe sings i' the nose
Cannot contain their urine

6
The gardener played his old bagpipe
To make the melons and the peaches ripe....
The threads are mixed in a tartan sound....

JUNE

1

Wide around
Hillock and valley, farm and village, smile:
And ruddy roofs and chimney-tops appear,
Of busy Leeds

2

The house had gone to bring again
To the midnight sky a sunset glow.
Now the chimney was all of the house that stood,
Like a pistil after the petals go.

3

As we gazed at the flaming schoolhouse chimney, and smelt the burning throughout the valley, I knew something momentous was occurring. At any moment I looked for a spectacular end to my already long life.

4

The sky is darkening.
The charred black chimneys jag up into the yellowish purple.
The stillness is every minute more awful
Like the dusk in a desert.

5

I have heard of a time when kings beneath bark rooves
watched chimneys,
When smoke was scarce, taxes were remitted.

6

To me at my fifth-floor window
  The chimney-pots in rows
Are sets of pipes pandean
  For every wind that blows

JULY

1
I love the staggers. Suddenly the surface
of the world is ice and I'm a magnificent
skater turning and spinning across whole hard
Pacifics and Atlantics.

2
About two o'clock the mist cleared away, and we beheld, stretched out in every direction, vast and irregular plains of ice, which seemed to have no end. Some of my comrades groaned, and my own mind began to grow watchful with anxious thoughts

3
You can hear the ice take hold.
Along the street
The yellowed drifts, cleansed by a minute's fall,
Wait to be fouled again. Your final breath
Is in the air, pure white, and moving fast.

4
The ice gives place, the forest grows.
I pile my fire with coal
And burn a world whereon the floes
Crept from the hungry Pole:
The ice gives place, the forest grows.

5
Every winter the liquid and trembling surface of the pond, which was so sensitive to every breath, and reflected every light and shadow, becomes solid to the depth of a foot and a half, so that it will support the heaviest teams, and perchance the snow covers it to an equal depth, and it is not to be distinguished from any level field.

6
Where are we? Listening to the owls
Or the ice or the rim of the moon:
Something that cries with little cries
Under the lake moon, under the ice

AUGUST

1
Along the wandering strand the sea unlocks glass balls
Jellyfish, broken shells, its tangle
Of nets, cork, bits of wood,
Coral.

2
The sea, heavy with jellyfish, jointed
With sharks, is completely present here.
It would be impossible to go anywhere
Except by water, or be nudged to glory.

3
'How all your faiths are ghosts and dreams,
  How in the silent sea
Your ancestors were Monotremes —
  Whatever these may be;
How you evolved your shining lights
  Of wisdom and perfection
From Jelly-fish and Trilobites
  By Natural Selection.'

4
...fringed Medusa floats like light in light,
  Medusa, with the loveliest of all fays
Pent in its irised bubble of jellied sheen,
Trailing long ferns of moon-light, shot with green
                And crimson rays and white,
Waving ethereal tendrils, ghostly sprays

5
pink
rice-grains, ink-
  bespattered jelly-fish, crabs like green
  lilies, and submarine
    toadstools, slide each on the other

6
and what dangles, lacerant,
under the belly of
the Portuguese Man O' War is also
familiar to the sea, familiar
to the sea, the sea.

SEPTEMBER

1
And when at last your eager soul shall fly
(As do all Canons of the *House*) on high.
May you find all things to your liking there,
A warmer Canonry await you where
No dry-rot shall corrupt, nor moisture rust,
Nor froward *Censor* dare break into dust

2
But being the Canon bars me Wit and Wine,
Enjoying the true Vine.
Being the Bayes must yield unto the Cross.
And all be now one Loss

3
You are a romantic Canon to talk about warming St. Paul's. the only real way of doing it is to warm the County of Middlesex, to which our revenues are hardly adequate

4
When at long midnight the Canon came to sleep
And normal things had yawned themselves away,
The nothingness was a nakedness, a point.

Beyond which fact could not progress as fact.

5
At one table's end the Necessary Dean
has broken out cigars
At the other the Oxonian Canon
splotchfaced now
is putting us all down with naughty quotes
from Persius we're too slow to get

6
In the streets of Winchester holding my hand she suddenly breaks away and I collide with a Canon: O darling, I say to Reine, do look where you're going. But the Canon was. I can see it in his outraged blue eyes, for one moment he was thinking I was speaking to him.

OCTOBER

1
Then there is the clock's
commentary, the continuing
prose that is the under-current
of all poetry.

2
Let the clock tick its anguishing seconds,
  Time is no larger than passion at last;
And the kiss of my hero shall make amends
  For the snubs of the past.

3
The monotonous evil clock
is creeper climbing on my heart
and with rank ivy will pull down
my hope of happiness and renown.

4
Its pendulum swung to and fro with a dull, heavy, monotonous clang; and when the minute-hand made the circuit of the face, and the hour was to be stricken, there came from the brazen lungs of the clock a sound which was clear and loud and deep and exceedingly musical

5
I make a trip to each clock in the apartment:
some hands point histrionically one way
and some point others, from the ignorant faces.
Time is an Etoile

6
Here is a face that says half-past seven the same way whether
  A murder or a wedding goes on, whether a funeral or a
  picnic crowd passes.
A tall one I know at the end of a hallway broods in shadows

NOVEMBER

1
It was the Fifth of November, and at every turn she had met groups of children bearing their dummy towards the bonfire, on a chair or in a handcart, and assailing her with, 'Penny for the Guy.' It was curiously shocking to be confronted with these effigies, stuffed with straw, bedizened in human rags, sagging forward over the string that fastened them by the waist to their conveyance.

2
While, on remembered lawns, the flash
Of fireworks dazzles night;
Sparklers spray and rockets swish,
Soar high and break in falling showers
Of glitter; the bonfire gallivants

3
Catherine-wheels, said I, are stronger than the Lion,
Lion immature and tame,
And Roman Candles louder, brighter than Orion,
And more beautiful of name.

4
A fter altercations round the oily cycle-lamp
W onderful and sudden showers in blackest air,
K ingly gold eclipsing the ineffectual stars.
E very bang expended. One smouldering spark.
S ilence. Smell of sulphur. Re-instated dark.

5
Squibs, Catherine wheels, and golden rain
Spurt light on the November scene
Where schoolboys chant a cruel refrain
And do not think what the words mean.

6
Rockets and Roman candles make
  An orchard of the sky,
Whence magic trees their petals shake
  Upon each gazing eye.

DECEMBER

1
For that is happiness: to wander alone
Surrounded by the same moon, whose tides remind us of ourselves,
Our distances, and what we leave behind.

2
Listen. The glass is breaking.
The trees are stumbling forward
into the night. Winds rush to meet them.
The moon is broken like a mirror,
its pieces flash now in the crown
of the tallest oak.

3
He makes for the moons, believing them
to be his own, for weren't there whispers
at his death-bed? 'Moon', they murmured,
as if delivering a kiss. 'There will be Moon'

4
From deep-set
Windows I contemplate the immature moon
Upon the louvred roof of the orangery,
The snow well-thatched with straw, my
Moorish fabrics sapient with
My love of heavy clothing.

5
And pristine alphabets and cows that moo
And moo as they jump over moons as new
As that crisp cusp toward which you voyage now.

6
Full-orb'd in her splendour the Moon rose on high,
And shed her pure light o'er the blue-vaulted sky,
While mountains and vallies, and woodlands, and streams,
Were glowing with beauty beneath her fair beams.

Answers

JANUARY
1 Tennyson Turner: Letty's Globe
2 Rupert Brooke: The Young Man in April
3 Thomas Beedome: The Choice
4 James Joyce: Chamber Music XXIV
5 Ernest Dowson: Terre Promise
6 Browning: A Toccata of Galuppi's

FEBRUARY
1 E Nesbit: Among His Books
2 Vaughan: On Sir Thomas Bodley's Library
3 Thom Gunn: His Rooms in College
4 Wycherley: Advice to a Young Friend on the Choice of His Library
5 Cowley: The Thief
6 James Thomson: In the Room

MARCH
1 Alasdair Maclean: The Peaceable Kingdom. *The Fox*
2 Ian Serraillier: The Fox
3 Henry Fielding: Hunting Song
4 Suzanne Knowles: Fox Dancing
5 Meredith: Young Reynard
6 A P Herbert: Sport Song for Sentimentalists

APRIL
1 E Arlington Robinson: Old King Cole
2 Jenny Joseph: Fables I
3 Peacock: Margery Daw
4 Edith Sitwell: The Sleeping Beauty 22
5 Julian Bell: Nonsense
6 Anthony C. Deane: Jack and Jill

MAY
1 Thwaite: On Consulting 'Contemporary Poets of the English Language'
2 Blunden: Rival Feasts
3 Anne Stevenson: A Legacy
4 Gavin Ewart: Tallness is All
5 Dryden: The Author's Apology for Heroic Poetry and Poetic Licence
6 Wilfrid Gibson: The Golden Room

JUNE
1 Edna St Vincent Millay: The Cairn
2 R E Egerton Warburton: Past and Present
3 George Orwell: A Clergyman's Daughter Chapter Four, 4
4 U A Fanthorpe: Half-Term
5 William Cooper: Scenes from Provincial Life Part 1, III, A Morning at School
6 William Cowper: A Review of Schools 839-844

JULY
1 Craig Raine: The Book of the Market
2 Thomas Randolph: An Ode to Mr Anthony Stafford to hasten him into the country
3 Carole Satyamurti: Strawberries
4 Shelley: Marenghi XXIV
5 Austen: Emma, Chapter XLII
6 Sydney Smith: Letter to Mrs. Baring July 1834

AUGUST
1 Rex Warner: The Aerodrome Chap XIII, Alterations
2 Amy Clampitt: Perseus Airborne
3 Charles Madge: Birdseye
4 C Day Lewis:A Time to Dance
5 Stuart Conn: Arrivals I
6 David Gascoyne: The Very Image

SEPTEMBER
1 Ivor Winters: By the Road to the Air-Base
2 Alfred Domett: Hougoumont
3 Jean Ingelow: Echo and the Ferry
4 Alice Meynell: The Rainy Summer
5 Shenstone: Hope, A Pastoral Ballad
6 V Sackville-West: Bee-Master

OCTOBER
1 A J Munby: Dorothy: A Country Story iii
2 Douglas Stewart: The Silkworms
3 Margaret Cavendish: Of Many Worlds in This World
4 William Stafford: A Bird inside a Box
5 Graves: The Treasure Box
6 Peter Scupham: The Box

NOVEMBER
1 Patrick Kavanagh: The Great Hunger XII
2 Terence Tiller: Street Performers
3 Edmund Gosse: Father and Son, Chapter IV
4 Heath Stubbs: All the Fun of the Fair V
5 MacNeice: The Casualty
6 Richmal Crompton: William the Pirate. William and the Musician

DECEMBER
1 Meade Falkner: Christmas Day. The Family Sitting
2 Rev. Cuthbert Bede: The Adventures of Mr. Verdant Green. Part II Chap. VIII
3 Luke Wadding: Christmas Day
4 Anne Ridler: Expectans Expectavi
5 Clement Paman: On Christmas Day
6 Shakespeare: Love's Labour's Lost I i

COVER: Robert Louis Stevenson: Travels With a Donkey Chap 1

Marks and Prizes

730 Pamela Thompson (ineligible for a prize)
730 G. Ingli James (ineligible for a prize)
730 Elspeth Christie (ineligible for a prize)
730 Caroline Heal (ineligible for a prize)
730 Brian Jordan (ineligible for a prize)

1st Prize
720 S Woodman
720 John Taylor
720 Ben Vizoskie

2nd Prize
702 Dr. Ian Paterson

3rd Prize
700 Jenny Naish

685 Judith Neal and Adam Pothecary
630 Sue Bird
620 Angela Buckley
620 Alan Hollinghurst
597 Steve Osborn
585 Mary Milne-Day, Sara Price, Anne Willitts
581 Tom Durham
560 Alison Sheehan-Hunt
550 Sabina and Chloe Sutherland
545 W.A.Kyle
525 Mrs P.J.Pearce
525 Joan and Jo Lampen
510 Janet Woodhead
460 Kenneth Thornton
427 Michael and Carolyn Greet
410 Rosemary Scott and Alison Walker
400 Gli Amici
400 Gerard Benson
280 Gillian Rigby
200 The Mossfield Gang
190 Tino Tenner
154 Val Marshall-George
150 Florence Yarwood
100 Pauline Jameson

Remarks

Compiling Nemo's Almanac and sending it out to an avid clientele waiting like greyhounds in the slips, or at least at square leg or deep extra cover, is a privilege and often a pleasure. It allows me to become something much more than mere friends with people I have never met, and to enter into correspondence with men and women who have amazingly fertile brains, massive knowledge and a more than kindly disposition. There is, I'm afraid, a downside: the sudden and unexpected loss of one of those friends can stab to the heart and bring a lurch of sorrow. So it has been with the death of one of our most loyal competitors, Gabriel Baugniet. What a loss. She wrote joyful, entertaining letters interspersed with photographs and drawings; she contributed savage and sparkling guest pages; she argued scholarly points with chapter and verse and always with wit. And she steadfastly refused, as her husband Phillip asserts, to resort to the internet. She was a delight, perhaps the perfect Nemoniac and is irreplaceable. Little though it may mean in the great scheme of things, this edition is dedicated to her and the memory of her joyous dedication to Nemo and, far beyond that, to literature and scholarship. Thank you, Gabriel.

But Nemo, of course, is not the only literary competition clamouring for your attention. Many of you, I know, also take a shot at the other one –Hide and Seek. Hide and Seek has been, for 45 years, edited by the tireless Ruth Aspinall who has finally decided that it is time to stop and hand over to a new mind. That new mind is Kenneth Thornton, another Nemoniac and therefore not inexperienced in esoteric conundra. If you fancy a different challenge (and I think it will be a challenge) all the necessary information is within the back cover of this almanac, and Kenneth would be delighted to hear from you. You'll see, if you order one, that the names of the entrants are not all unfamiliar. Why not double your pleasure and do both simultaneously?

You will notice that there are two guest pages in this almanac. This is not, as you may think, a clever way for me to avoid doing too much work: it is actually more problematical in some ways, because I have to adapt my own pages and sometimes must leave out authors who would otherwise be quoted more than once. This means I have to go searching for yet *another* writer who has written on bells/stomach complaints/the Higgs boson/ yeast/indelible ink or chrysanthemums, and it isn't always easy. I asked Caroline Heal for a page and, out of the cerulean or even the ultramarine came another from Jeff Dowse *on the same subject* would you believe? Well, yes, you will believe it because here they are. Have fun! I hope they have checked their pages and references because I haven't.

That well-known pseudonym, Dave Dolan Jnr., made this year what seems to me an excellent suggestion which I have already adopted, though so far only one of you will know that. The plan is that each year a prize of £10 will be given, entirely haphazardly and at random to one of the contestants who has not won first, second or third prize. It is, in effect, a prize for taking part, and nobody knows who is going to win it, including me. I'm not yet sure how the winner will be chosen. It could be by putting names in a hat and have them pulled out by the postman, it could be by reading out the names and stopping when an owl hoots; it could be a matter of pinning up the names on the wall and handing my wife a dart…I haven't yet decided whether this person's name should appear among the prizes. Perhaps it should for the sake of that clarity that politicians are always on about, as they obscure everything they can, but the recipient will probably not be decided before the almanac goes to press, so all I can say at present is *well done* to Dnfrguio Keutowjal.

A number of you have wondered whether enclosing the panel above the rules with your entry is of paramount importance. It is

something I took over without much thought, but now I have thought I am inclined to agree that it is hardly necessary and would do wonders for the state of my study floor. I imagine that it was done, to start with, in order to prove that you had *bought* your almanac and not stolen it from another competitor in a public library, but public libraries that are of any use are in very short supply now, and frankly, in these straitened days, I'll receive an entry from anybody. So forget enclosing the panel. But do read the rules again. I have incorporated my strictures about the internet and most of you seem to be quite happy about that new rule; some, indeed, quite joyous; I have received many letters of approval. I suppose I'll never be able to stop internet use, but at least you will later have to go and find the book the extract appears in.

Was I, by the way, clear about the new rule? Not everybody thought so. Here it is again: if you use the internet, whether you admit it or not, the whole of that month's marks will be deleted. I haven't been too hard-hearted this year but I will be next!

One or two small misprints from you this year, but nothing to provoke disproportionate cachinnation. What's happened to your sense of humour? And no quotations found by a mere handful, so no extra marks. Don't forget to guess at ones you don't know. Many a (good) guess can find you extra points and I do watch out for them. There was a bit of discussion about December 3. Most people agreed with me – and the New Oxford Book of Seventeenth Century Verse - that it was Luke Wadding, but I realise that this is not universally accepted, so I have given marks for the alternatives.

And now…here we go again. Good hunting.

Notices

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'Ah, mon ami, you are exercising ze little grey cells, is that not so?'

'Too true, Poirot. And trying to find the secret of chimneys.'

'Chimneys? Ah, I remember. Not so difficult, but ze clock is against you, eh?'

'Not so difficult? It's not only the clock, but jellyfish, layers of ice and more kingfishers than I can count.'

'But, look, you have almost a year to search ze canon?'

'Search *for* the canon, you mean. Look here, Poirot, I don't so much mind naked women against me, but I do draw the line at bagpipes.'

'I fancy you are not alone in that, Hastings my friend. I imagine there will be fireworks.'

'You imagine correctly. There are fireworks already. Mystifying ones.'

'And I see the moon is full.'

'Not mine. My moon is empty. Utterly. I have not a clue.'

'Then, come; we must set about finding one. We will telegraph to Yorkshire. Send £3 to **Nigel Forde. The Gate House, Burnby Lane POCKLINGTON YO42 1UL** £10 if you want four of zeze Almanacs et voila – all will suddenly become clear.'